**Ecosystem Services and the Value of Places**

In the US Environmental Protection Agency, the World Wide Fund for Nature and many other environmental organisations, it is standard practice to evaluate particular woods, wetlands and other such places on the basis of the 'ecosystem services' they are thought to provide. I argue that this practice cannot account for one important way in which places are of value to human beings. When they play integral roles in our lives, particular places have a kind of value which cannot be adequately conceived in terms of service provision. Since it is in this respect limited, the ecosystem services framework can, I suggest, be criticised on grounds of justice.

Keywords: duty, ecosystem services, environmental ethics, place, value, justice

Suppose that government administrators are trying to decide whether to allow a certain forest to be felled in order to make room for a housing development. Amongst other things, they will need to know what sorts of value the forest has and how much of each sort of value it has. They will need, where appropriate, to see the relevant values expressed as prices. And they will need to consider whether the loss of value could be offset by, say, the restoration of some other forest.

Nowadays, such assessments are typically carried out using a particular conceptual framework. The UN Environment Programme, the US Government's Environmental Protection Agency, the World Wide Fund for Nature, Friends of the Earth, the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs—in these and other environmental organisations, the *ecosystem services framework* (ESF) is standardly employed to assess the value of particular places. If the value of a forest, wetland, heath, prairie, shoreline, reef, meadow, mudflat or mountain valley has been assessed by an environmental agency, then, chances are, it has been assessed by means of the ESF.[1]

[1] Like those who adopt the ESF, I focus on places that are natural, in the sense that their current states are not substantially the intended products of human action. Yet that choice should not be taken to indicate a commitment to some fundamental ontological distinction between 'natural' and 'non-natural' places. My argument presupposes no such distinction.

Granted, *place* is not synonymous with *ecosystem*, and it will in many cases be unclear whether a certain place is an ecosystem in its own right, rather than part of a larger ecosystem or a collection of smaller ones, or something of an entirely different ontological order. Nonetheless, whether or not they think that whatever place they are considering is itself an ecosystem, those who adopt the ESF will assess its value on the basis of the contribution it makes to the provision of ecosystem services. According to the ESF, then, the aforementioned forest might be deemed to be of value because, amongst other things, it plays a role in the cycling of nutrients (a *supporting* ecosystem service), supplies timber (a *provisioning* ecosystem service) and absorbs atmospheric carbon dioxide (a *regulating* ecosystem service). It might also be thought to contribute to the supply of certain *cultural* ecosystem services, by inspiring local artists, for instance, or by serving as a woodland burial site.

In the following, I argue that the ESF cannot provide an adequate account of one important way in which particular places can benefit, and so be of value to, human beings. I propose that when they play integral roles in our lives, particular places have a kind of value which cannot be adequately conceived in terms of the provision of ecosystem services. If it works, my argument shows that the ESF can provide only a very limited account of the value of places. Moreover, it indicates that using that conceptual framework can result in the further marginalisation of social groups which are in various respects already marginalised. It follows, I conclude, that the use of the ESF can be criticised on grounds of justice.

The paper is structured as follows. I begin by considering a line of reasoning which seems to suggest that the ESF *can* provide a satisfactory account of all the ways that places can benefit, and so be of value to, human beings. In sections 1 and 2, I discuss the argument that since it is not possible to have any direct moral duties to them, particular places can be of only instrumental or 'service' value, if they are of any value at all. In Section 3, I show that that argument has a false premise. In Section 4, I consider William J. Fitzpatrick's argument that certain places have non-instrumental value because they play constitutive roles in human flourishing. Although that argument fails to convince, Fitzpatrick is, I suggest, right to note that something to which it is not possible to have any direct moral duties can have non-instrumental value when it is part of a valuable whole. Drawing on some

examples from literature and anthropology, I use Section 5 to argue that particular places can have this sort of non-instrumental value when they are (in a sense I explain) integral to a person's life. In sections 6, 7 and 8, I argue that such *constitutive* values cannot be adequately conceived in terms of the ESF, and that, in this respect, that framework is severely limited, even when judged by the lights of its own, anthropocentric standards.

**1 Duties to Places?**

In *On Moral Considerability*, Mark H. Bernstein does not discuss ecosystem services. However, he does have some interesting things to say about the relations between duty and value – and, as will become clear, what he has to say on these matters is relevant to our discussion of the ESF.

Near the beginning of his book, Bernstein distinguishes between those entities which qualify as moral patients and those which do not. An entity falls into the former category, he maintains, if and only if it is possible to have one or more direct moral duties to it.[2] These claims are uncontroversial; yet, having made them, Bernstein moves on to make a contentious statement about the sort of value that can be had by entities that do not qualify as moral patients: 'The only value that they have is instrumental, value in the service of other individuals who themselves have value.' (Bernstein 1998, p. 117)

Not all those entities that fail to qualify as moral patients will be of instrumental value: some will have no value at all. So I suspect that Bernstein meant to say that if an entity is not a moral patient, then it can be of only instrumental value, if it is of any value at all. But if *that* conditional statement is true, and if, moreover, no particular places qualify as moral patients, then it follows that particular places can be of only instrumental value, if they are of any value at all. Formally:

1. If it is not possible to have any direct moral duties to x, then x can be of only instrumental value, if it is of any value at all

[2] Bernstein 1998, Chapter 1, especially p. 14. Bernstein refers to 'obligations' rather than 'duties'. In this context, however, the difference is irrelevant.

2. <u>It is not possible to have any direct moral duties to any particular places</u>

   Therefore, any particular place can be of only instrumental value, if it is of any value at all

If sound, this argument goes some way towards justifying the use of the ESF. For if particular places really can be of only instrumental or 'service' value, if they are of any value at all, then the ESF is, presumably, able to provide a satisfactory account of whatever value they have.[3]

But is the argument sound? Begin by considering Premise 2. Writers such as Eric Katz (1997, p. 158), Tom Sorell (2000, p. 162) and Mary Midgley (1983, p. 179) hold that it is possible to have direct moral duties to some places (Katz cites 'the rain forest', Sorell 'forests and islands' and Midgley 'islands'). These claims are, however, very questionable. Consider what an entity must be *like* if it is possible to have any direct moral duties to it. On this issue, opinions differ; however, according to one very plausible view, it is only possible to have such duties to an entity if the entity in question has *a good of its own*. To say that an entity has a *good*, in this context, is to say that it is capable of being either benefited or harmed. If, moreover, it has a good *of its own*, then it must be possible to make sense of its being either benefited or harmed without referring to the desires, interests or goods of any other entity. Consider the example of James Bond's liver. James can certainly harm his liver, by, for instance, drinking lots of Martinis, and in this respect his liver differs from those sorts of entities, such as pencils and bicycles, which can be damaged but not harmed. Even so, to say that drinking lots of Martinis is bad for James's liver is only a roundabout way of saying that quaffing Martinis is bad for James. Although his liver has a good, it does not have a good of its own. That distinction belongs to James (or at least, would belong to him, were he a real person), but to none of his organs.

In this respect, James Bond is more like a plant than either a liver or a bicycle. A spider plant, for example, can be benefited or harmed. To pot it in treacle or sprinkle it with concentrated sulphuric acid is to harm it. However, unlike the case of the liver or that of the bicycle, the spider plant's good does not depend on the desires, interests or goods of any other entity. In order to explain what it

[3] No doubt places have instrumental value for some nonhuman beings. In what follows, however, I focus on their value for human beings.

means for a spider plant to be benefited or harmed, one need refer only to the sorts of entities spider plants are. The interests, desires or goods of us humans, or of anything else for that matter, are beside the point (see further, Sandler 2007, p.77).

Now consider particular places. The first set of questions one faces in trying to assess whether one could have duties to them are ontological and epistemological, rather than moral. If one is to be able to discharge duties to a particular place, then one must be able to distinguish it from other places. In many cases, however, this is likely to prove difficult. For instance, it may well be unclear whether a particular area of heath counts as a particular place, a collection of places or merely part of some larger place. Turning from the dimension of space to that of time, it might also be unclear whether, if the heath reverts to woodland, one is dealing with a change in a single place or the replacement of one place with another. And then, of course, there is the question of subjectivity. Must a place be a place for a subject? Does the heath qualify as a place if it is a place for no one – neither any human being nor any other sort of subject (see further, Casey 1997)?

Fortunately, there is no need to answer these difficult questions here, for one needs only a vague sense of what a place is to see that they are not the sorts of 'things' to which it is possible to have direct moral duties. To be sure, a human being or a dog could perhaps count as a place for a flea, say, or a tapeworm. But the sorts of places with which we are here concerned - particular forests, heaths, meadows, mudflats and so forth - do not have goods of their own. Maybe one could speak of certain conditions as harming certain places, as cadmium pollution might be said to harm mangroves. Yet cadmium harms mangroves in the sense that acid rain harms masonry. It could not harm a mangrove in anything like the way that being kicked could harm a dog or being potted in treacle could harm a spider plant (see Sandler 2007, p. 77). *Pace* Katz, Sorell and Midgley, particular places do not seem to be the sorts of things to which one could have direct moral duties. Premise 2 seems to be true.

**2 Duties and Values**

As we saw, Bernstein would endorse Premise 1. The following quotations indicate that he would not be alone in doing so:

> By 'intrinsic value' we refer here to the value something has independent of its usefulness, that is, regardless of whether it is a means to (instrumental to) some other end… [A]nthropocentrists will only admit indirect (or non-intrinsic) wrongness in human-caused environmental devastation. (Brennan and Lo 2010, pp. 43, 45)

> While I think that Kant's critics are right in rejecting his claim that we have no direct duties to animals, that they are just instruments for us to use in any way we see fit, I think that they move too quickly to the program of ethics by extension. (Evans 2005, p. 10)[4]

> For [anthropocentrists] humans can have no duties to rocks, rivers, or ecosystems… [T]he environment is the wrong kind of primary target for an ethic. It is a means, not an end in itself. (Holmes Rolston III, quoted in O'Neil 1997, p. 48)

The first quotation suggests that to say that our duties to x are all indirect is to say that x can be of only 'non-intrinsic' (that is, instrumental) value, if it is of any value at all. The second implies that if, as Kant believes, one cannot have direct moral duties to any nonhuman animals, then any value such animals have must reflect their usefulness (or, presumably, potential usefulness) and nothing more. In the third quotation, Rolston expresses his commitment to the view that someone who denies that we could have any direct duties to rocks, rivers and ecosystems must regard these entities as either valuable merely as means or else entirely lacking in value.

The common assumption, then, is that Premise 1 is true. Now we have already seen that Premise 2 seems to be true. If that impression were correct, and if Premise 1 were also true, then it would follow that particular places could only be of instrumental value, if they are of any value at all. And if *that* were the case, then the inherently instrumentalist ESF would, presumably, be an

[4] Incidentally, Evans' statement seems to presuppose an inaccurate reading of Kant's views on our moral relations with nonhuman animals. See further, O'Neill 1998, pp. 212-3 and Wood 1998, p. 191.

appropriate framework to use to try to account for all the various ways that such places could be of value to human beings.

## 3 Non-instrumental Value

But *is* Premise 1 true? One way to refute it would be to find an example of something to which it is not possible to have any direct moral duties but which nonetheless has non-instrumental value. However, before initiating a search, it may be useful to pause to consider what exactly it means for something to have non-instrumental value.

It is sometimes supposed that something can be of non-instrumental value only if it is valued for its non-relational properties. For instance, although Rick O'Neil (1997, p. 46) states that by intrinsic value he means 'noninstrumental value, the value a thing has in itself, as opposed to the value it has as a means to some good', he also implies that when things have this sort of value they have it due to their 'nonrelational properties'. Yet, as Christine Korsgaard has shown, such claims conflate two distinctions: (1) the distinction between the value something has in itself (which she calls intrinsic value) and the value it derives from some other source (extrinsic value); and (2) the distinction between the value something has as a means to an end and the value it has for other reasons (i.e., instrumental and non-instrumental value, respectively). Korsgaard points out that the value of a thing can be both extrinsic (i.e., relational) and non-instrumental (1983, pp. 169-173).

Furthermore, some writers assume that something can be of non-instrumental value only if it is valuable as an end in itself and not merely as a means to an end. For example, having suggested (rightly, as I shall argue) that some entities to which one could not have direct moral duties are nonetheless of non-instrumental value, O'Neil (1997) seems to proceed on the assumption that something can have this kind of value only if it is valuable as an end in itself. If, however, *non-instrumental value* is taken to mean *value that is not instrumental value*, then it is clear that something can be of non-instrumental value even if it is *not* of value as an end in itself. Consider the distinction between instrumental value and *constitutive* value, for instance. Something has the former if it helps to bring about some end, where the relevant 'bringing about' must amount to some kind of causal

contribution.[5] By contrast, something has constitutive value, not (or not just) because of its causal effects, but because it is *part* of something of value.[6] Russ Shafer-Landau (2013, p. 255) gives the example of a particular brushstroke in a painting by Van Gogh. The brushstroke is not (or at least, not merely) valuable as a means to the end of the production of the painting. So it is not (or not merely) of instrumental value. Nor is it of value as an end in itself. Its value derives, instead, from the role it plays in 'constituting' something that is of value. It is of *constitutive* value.

**4 Fitzpatrick's Case**

A brushstroke in a beautiful painting is just one example of something with non-instrumental (or more precisely, constitutive) value to which it is not possible to have any direct moral duties. Such examples indicate that Premise 1 is false. The argument sketched in Section 1 would seem, therefore, to be unsound. It does not provide a compelling reason to think that particular places can be of only instrumental value, if they are of any value at all.

But *are* any places of non-instrumental value? William J. Fitzpatrick (2004, p. 321), for his part, argues that 'a broad range of natural things and places have non-instrumental value by virtue of playing constitutive, and not merely instrumental, roles in the flourishing of human beings'. The point, he suggests, can be made by means of a comparison with friendship. Genuine friendship is not a human good merely because it tends to have certain welcome effects, such as the production of pleasure. Fitzpatrick maintains that it counts as a human good because it is, as Aristotle recognised, an essential constituent of human flourishing. And friends are of non-instrumental value since they are 'constituents of friendship' (2004, p. 321). Now, Fitzpatrick continues, the same holds true of certain sorts of engagement with the natural world. Like friendship, some such engagement is an essential constituent of human flourishing: 'engagement with at least some range of natural things and places

[5] Similar interpretations of what it means to have instrumental value are provided by Mark Greene (2007, p. 579), Joel Kupperman (2005, p. 660), Ian Carter (1999, p. 54) and Shelly Kagan (1998, p. 287).

[6] The distinction between instrumental and constitutive value is discussed in more detail by Jeremy Moss (2014, p. 39), Donald S. Maier (2012, pp. 15-16), Gerald Dworkin (1988, p. 80) and Donald H. Regan (1986, p. 203).

is… a core ingredient of human flourishing' (2004, p. 329). And just as friends derive non-instrumental value from being constituents of friendship, so 'a broad range of natural things and places' are of non-instrumental value because they are constituents of such engagement.

Fitzpatrick's argument turns on the claim that engagement with some natural things and places is an essential constituent of human flourishing. To try to justify that claim he appeals, first, to some passages from Ralph Waldo Emerson which attest to 'aesthetic delights that run so deep that they come across as nothing less than fundamental goods for human beings… without which a human life would be significantly impoverished.' (2004, p. 327) Second, he refers to our need to see 'how we fit into a larger, magnificent order.' (2004, p. 327) In neither case, he suggests, is there a 'plausible substitute' for engagement with the natural world (2004, p. 329). Fitzpatrick does not claim that either sort of engagement with nature is a sufficient condition for flourishing. But he does suggest that both are necessary.

Fitzpatrick's claims are implausible, however. Even if certain capacities for aesthetic appreciation are essential for human flourishing (which is not obvious) it is implausible to suppose that those capacities can be exercised only in relation to the sorts of things and places that so impress nature lovers such as Emerson. Likewise, even if human beings can flourish only if they have a sense of how they fit into some magnificent ordered whole, it would take a great deal of argument, and much more than Fitzpatrick provides, to show that that whole must be a 'grand *natural* order' (2004, p. 327; my emphasis). Fitzpatrick maintains that one 'cannot fully grasp' one's sense of being part of some grand order 'while milling about in a shopping mall, or sitting in the office' (2004, p. 327). That isn't obviously true; but even if it were true, it would not entail that one can appreciate one's place in such an order only when one is in the midst of natural, rather than artefactual, things. Can a cathedral or a synagogue provide no sense of one's place in the great scheme of things?

Fitzpatrick therefore fails to establish that 'engagement with at least some range of natural things and places is… a *core* ingredient of human flourishing' (2004, p. 329). A woman who does her utmost to avoid green and growing things might participate in a number of other worthwhile activities. She may be a talented scientist or artist, or a great supporter of humanitarian causes; and if she is any of these things, it is not at all clear that her life must be judged to be lacking. Strange

though it may seem to those of us who enjoy hiking, birdwatching and reading papers on environmental ethics, it remains to be shown that engagement with nature is an essential part of human flourishing.[7]

**5 The Constitutive Value of Places**

Fitzpatrick does not manage to show that engagement with some 'natural things and places' is an essential constituent of human flourishing. But he is, I believe, right to suggest that some such things and places are of non-instrumental value because they are parts of valuable wholes. But what might those wholes be?

William Wordsworth's poem 'Michael' provides a clue (cf. Malpas 1999, pp. 1-2). The individual named in the title is an old shepherd who, Wordsworth says, had lived 'Upon the forest-side of Grasmere Vale' for over eighty years. It is clear that that the Vale is of great *value* to the shepherd. Wordsworth writes that

> … grossly that man errs, who would suppose
> That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
> Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.

And he goes on to convey *why* the Vale is of value to him:

> Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
> The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
> He had so often climbed; which had impressed
> So many incidents upon his mind
> Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
> Which, like a book, preserved the memory

[7] For a detailed defence of this claim, see Attfield 2011, p. 36.

Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,

Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts

The certainty of honourable gain;

Those fields, those hills—what could they less? had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him

A pleasurable feeling of blind love,

The pleasure which there is in life itself.

(Wordsworth 1963, pp. 221-222)

It is not possible to have any direct moral duties to Grasmere Vale. The Vale can be neither benefited nor harmed; for all its beauty, it is in this respect more like a bicycle than a dog, for instance, or even a daffodil. Furthermore, Wordsworth does not suggest that Michael believes that it is possible to have any duties to the Vale. There is no evidence that the shepherd thinks that Grasmere Vale could be harmed or in any other manner wronged. Even so, it is clear that the place is of great value to him. It is also clear that the old shepherd values Grasmere Vale because it is the *particular* place it is. One imagines that Michael sees the hills surrounding Grasmere as the same hills that his parents knew, and their parents before them. This or that brook, this or that copse of trees, the sheep-fold higher up the hillside – these things remind the shepherd of events in his own life or of events that he has heard stories about. It is these particular features of this particular place which have 'impressed so many incidents upon his mind', which have 'like a book' preserved those memories. It is *these* hills which – as he might put it – tell the story of his family and community; *these* hills which are part of who he is. From Michael's perspective, no other area of land would do.

Although Wordsworth himself was not able to achieve this sort of intimacy with the land, autobiographical works such as *The Prelude* make it clear that he derived part of his sense of identity from the crags, fells and glacial valleys of the Lake District. The connection between place and sense of identity is even more pronounced in the life and works of John Clare, a man who, as Jonathan Bate (2003, p. 363) puts it, derived his 'profoundest sense of personal identity' from the woods, heaths and fields around the village of his birth (cf. Rigby 2004, pp. 59-60). And it would be a mistake to

suppose that that kind of intimacy can be found only in the lives and works of nineteenth-century Romantics. The literature of anthropology, environmental psychology and cultural geography provides plenty of examples of people – and peoples – who derive part of their sense of identity from the particular places they inhabit. Thus in his acclaimed study *Children of Crisis*, Robert Coles relates the views of a tenant farmer who lives and works 'in a broad valley at the foot of the hill country of Tennessee'. '[F]or us it's a choice we have,' says the farmer, 'between going away or else staying here and not seeing much money at all, but working on the land, like we know how to do, living here, where you can feel you're you, and no one else…' (1971, pp. 15, 17-18) The anthropologist Mark Nuttall finds similar views prevailing amongst the people of Greenland. Each Greenlandic community, he writes, has 'its own recognised territory, known as the *piniarfik*, or *piniariartarfik* ("the hunting place")' This, he explains, is 'a personalised landscape, having significance for individual and family history'; as such, it is 'a key component of a sense of identity' (1998, p. 88). Miriam Kahn's study of the people of Wamira, a small village in southeastern Papua New Guinea, provides another example. For the villagers, she writes, the surrounding landscape

> resounds… with narratives of collective history and personal experience. It provides tangible forms for the mooring of memory. What looks like a river, a hill, or a group of stones may, in fact, resonate meaningfully to Wamirans as a type of moral landscape conveying messages about human frailties, foibles, and responsibilities. Meaning attached to the landscape unfolds in language, names, stories, myths, and rituals. These meanings crystallize into shared symbols and ultimately link people to a sense of common history and individual identity.[8]

A vast number of studies have addressed the relations between *kinds* of place and ways of life: between nomadic Bedouins and deserts, for instance, or Inuit peoples and polar regions. Yet examples

[8] Kahn 1996, pp. 167-8; cf. p. 178. Examples of this sort need to be regarded with a critical eye. Rootedness can, and often does, go hand in hand with small-mindedness and xenophobia. But it would be a very jaded commentator who concluded that *all* those people who enjoyed such intimacy with the places they inhabit are small-minded or xenophobic. In any case, suppose, for the sake of argument, that some of them are not. My concern here will be to assess the kind of value places can have for those sorts of people.

of the sort cited above indicate the relations between *particular* places and certain people or peoples. They suggest that particular places can supply people with certain sorts of benefit. Particular places, it would seem, can provide 'tangible forms for the mooring of memory' and 'a sense of common history'. More generally, they can provide a context within which one's own life and work has meaning, and they can help to shape one's sense of who one is.

These claims are, I admit, vague. Much more would need to be said to give a clear account of what it might mean for a place to provide a context within which one's own life and work has meaning, for instance. Still, despite their vagueness, they do give a general impression of the sorts of benefits people obtain from particular places in these kinds of cases. And that general impression will be enough for me to make the point I want to make.

That point concerns value. In the kinds of cases we are considering, particular places benefit, and so have value for, the people who live and work in them. What *kind* of value do they have?

Begin with the proposal that they have instrumental value. If x has instrumental value, if, that is, it is of value as a means to some end, then the relevant end can be specified without referring to x (see, e.g., Matravers 2013, p. 35). But on any plausible interpretation of the sorts of case we are considering, that is not possible. Take the example of Grasmere Vale. It could be of merely instrumental value for someone who wishes to invest in land. For the investor, the place is of value because it is a means to the end of his making money, and many other similarly priced tracts of land would do just as well. The case of Michael is, however, entirely different. Grasmere Vale is not of value merely as a means to the end of the shepherd continuing to live as he does, for that end could not be specified without referring to the Vale itself. That is to say, one could not provide anything approaching a satisfactory description of Michael's life without referring to the particular vale in which he lives and works. So, is it rather the case that the Vale is of instrumental value because it is a means to the end of the shepherd continuing to have a certain sense of who he is?[9] No, for it is not possible to describe Michael's sense of who he is without referring to the place in which his sense of

[9] The claim that the Vale benefits Michael by constituting his identity raises a non-identity problem. For if Michael would not be who he is were it not for his relations to the Vale, then in what sense could *he* be better off on account of those relations? However, we are here considering the claim that the Vale benefits Michael by (partly) constituting his *sense* of identity. And that claim does not raise a non-identity problem.

identity was forged and in which it continues to be sustained. Granted, if the shepherd had always lived in some other place, then it is likely that *that* place would have come to be integral to his life and his sense of identity. However, as things stand, it is Grasmere Vale alone that has that distinction. For Michael, there are no alternative service providers.

In these sorts of case, the language of *constitution* is more appropriate than that of *instrumentality*. I take no stand on the specifics. One could say that Grasmere Vale partly constitutes Michael's way of life, or his sense of who he is. However the point is expressed, it will be clear that the particular place benefits the shepherd, not (or not simply) by serving as an effective means to some valuable end, but by being part of some whole which is of value to him. As such, its value will be constitutive rather than instrumental.

**6 Why the Provision of a Sense of Place is not an Ecosystem Service**

It might seem, at first sight, that the ESF could provide an adequate account of such values. Certainly, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment includes the provision of a 'sense of place' in its list of cultural ecosystem services. The Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the UK National Ecosystem Assessment and the Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services follow suit.[10] The problem with these attempts to frame the provision of a sense of place as an ecosystem service is not just that they are too simplistic. It would not be enough to develop a more sophisticated account of the relevant services. The problem is that talk of services implies instrumentality (Reyers et al. 2012, p. 504), and an instrumentalist conceptual framework is unable to capture what is in essence a constitutive relation.

[10] See (1) Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) *Ecosystems and Well-being: A Framework for Assessment* (Washington, DC: Island Press), p. 59; (2) http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=6382 (accessed 12 March 2015); (3) p. 4 of the Synthesis of the Key Findings of the UK National Ecosystem Assessment: it is 'in our environment where we find recreation, health and solace, and in which our culture finds its roots and sense of place. Scientists refer to these services that our environment provides as "ecosystem services"…' (http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/Resources/tabid/82/Default.aspx - accessed 12 March 2015), and (4) Roy Haines-Young and Marion Potschin, Common International Classification of Ecosystem Services (CICES): 2011 Update (see page 6 of http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/seeaLES/egm/Issue8a.pdf - accessed 12 March 2015).

The ESF is therefore unable to provide a satisfactory account of all the various ways that places can be of value to us. It works when places are of value because they serve as means to valuable ends. It is appropriate to conceive of water purification, for instance, or carbon sequestration as valuable ecosystem services. But the ESF cannot provide an adequate account of those cases when places are of value to people because they are integral to their lives.

## 7 The Charge of Romanticism

The following objection may be raised to the argument sketched above:

> The case for the constitutive value of places rests on a discredited conception of the relations between people and places. It presupposes that those people who continue to live in more traditional ways are rooted in the places they inhabit. Such people are assumed to dwell in certain essentially timeless places, their forms of life and senses of identity as fixed as their unchanging surroundings.
>
> Yet that singularly Romantic conception is no longer compelling. Social scientists such as Michael Keith, Steve Pile and Doreen Massey have shown that it fails to do justice to the fluidity of the relations between people and the places they inhabit. Consider sense of identity. A person's sense of identity, or indeed that of a people, is always in the process of being constructed. It is true that in order to make sense of a particular case, this process can be 'stopped to reveal an identity that is akin to a freeze-frame photograph of a racehorse at full gallop.' (Keith and Pile 1993, p. 28; cf. Massey 2005, p. 141) But that 'act of freezing' obscures the fact that the construction of a sense of identity is 'always an incomplete process.' (Keith and Pile 1993, p. 28) And what holds true of a person's sense of identity also applies to the places they inhabit. Writing of Skiddaw, a large hill twenty miles or so north of Michael's Vale, Massey (2005, p. 140) maintains that what is special about the place is 'not some romance of pre-given collective identity or of the eternity of the hills', for 'the hills are rising, the landscape is being eroded and deposited; the climate is shifting; the very rocks themselves

> continue to move on.' (2005, p. 140-1) There is no 'barely changing rootedness' here, only the 'event of place', 'a constellation of processes rather than a thing.' (2005, p. 154, 141)

Suppose, for argument's sake, that writers such as Massey and Pile are correct. That would give us reason to rethink the relations between people and the places they inhabit. Perhaps, as Massey (2005, p. 183) suggests, it should impel us to reassess Heidegger's notion of place, for instance. But it would not undermine the argument presented in this paper. For one can consistently hold that a particular place is of constitutive value to a person because it is partly constitutive of her form of life while accepting that neither the place nor the form of life is static, but that each continually shapes and reshapes the other through what Massey (risking the pathetic fallacy) calls a process of 'negotiation' (cf. Harvey 1996, p. 307-8).

**8 Services, Values and Justice**

There are two reasons why such values ought to be taken seriously by environmental policymakers. First, in many of those cases when a place has constitutive value for a person, it will be of very great value to that person.[11] Again, an admittedly Romantic example serves to put the issue in sharp relief. So consider, one more time, the example of Michael. It is not simply that Michael has a strong *preference* for 'the forest-side of Grasmere Vale' over other spatial locations, as he might have a preference for, say, milk rather than water in his porridge. The poem implies that the Vale has value for him in something like the way that his own life has value for him. Perhaps, if he hated himself, then he would also hate the Vale which, in his view, had helped to make him the man he is. But there is no evidence that Michael feels that way. Wordsworth's poem suggests, rather, that the place's value is presupposed in everything the old shepherd says and does. As such, it is likely to be for the most part invisible to him. (Perhaps it manifests itself as the 'pleasurable feeling of blind love' which 'there

[11] But not perhaps in all such cases. A particular place could conceivably be of constitutive value to a person even if she regards it as hostile or repellent. Think of the way in which the way of life of people on a frontier can be shaped through their efforts to subdue the surrounding, ever-encroaching wilderness.

is in life itself'.) Maybe, indeed, he would only come fully to realise the value of the Vale were he forced to leave it.[12] Nevertheless, the place would seem to be of considerable value to him.[13] And the same may be said of the value of their *piniarfik* to a group of Greenlanders or the value of the rivers and hills surrounding Wamira for the Wamirans. More generally, then, places that are of constitutive value for people are often of considerable value for those people. It is therefore important that their value is properly accounted for in the evaluative methods employed by those in environmental organisations such as the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) or the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

A second reason for taking the constitutive value of places seriously is as follows. In today's globalising world, many of those people (and peoples) for whom particular places have constitutive value are likely to be in various respects marginalised. Think of the Arctic indigenous peoples of whom Nuttall writes, or of Coles's tenant farmers, or even of modern-day hill farmers in the Lake District.[14] If, therefore, the members of environmental organisations such as UNEP or the EPA are to avoid further marginalising people who are already marginalised, then they will need to use methods that are sensitive to the kinds of value such people find in the places they inhabit. The issue is essentially one of procedural justice. Thomas Sikor et al. (2013, p. 199) maintain that the ecosystem services framework 'closes down possibilities for justice' since it tends to 'marginalise people by denying the recognition of their ways of knowing, conceptions of value and notions of governance.'[15] Though more work would be needed to prove the point, I would suggest that Sikor et al. are at least partly right. To use the ecosystem services framework is to risk marginalising some of those already marginalised people for whom places are of constitutive, and not merely instrumental, value.

[12] On the psychological effects of displacement, see Fullilove 1996.

[13] A remark from Coles's interviewee is relevant here. In the course of explaining how it is only in the place he lives that he feels truly himself, he considers the objection that, given his straitened circumstances, that might not be a cause for celebration. His words call to mind Nietzsche's notion of the eternal recurrence: '[A]lthough I can't say I'm a happy man here… if I had to choose… I don't think I'd know what to do but tell the Lord that I'll take this one, this life, all over again, with the pain and all.' (1971, pp. 16-17)

[14] On the marginalisation of Cumbrian hill farmers, see Mansfield 2008.

[15] Ernstson and Sörlin 2013 arrive at a similar conclusion. For a very different assessment of the ESF's potential for helping marginalised peoples, see Ramirez-Gomez et al. 2015.

## 9 Conclusions

Particular places cannot have goods of their own; consequently, it is not possible to have direct moral duties to them. Nonetheless, contrary to what is often supposed, something to which one could not have any direct moral duties need not be of merely instrumental value, if it is of any value at all. Indeed, particular places can have a certain kind of non-instrumental value – namely, constitutive value – when they are integral to people's lives. This sort of value cannot be adequately conceived in terms of the service-based conceptual framework that environmental decision makers typically use to evaluate places. To accommodate such cases, decision makers must therefore look beyond the ESF – perhaps to one of the forms of multicriteria decision analysis that seem increasingly to be winning support in the environmental sector.[16] There is, however, no space to consider these alternative options here. In this paper, I have merely tried to point out the limits of the ESF. If I am right, those limits are considerable.

## Acknowledgements

I owe a special thanks to Andy Hamilton and two anonymous reviewers for the detailed comments they provided on drafts of this paper. The ideas and arguments presented in it were first aired at the 2013 meeting of the International Society for Environmental Ethics, and I am grateful for the helpful feedback I received from audience members on that occasion. Finally, I would like to thank the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council for awarding me the six-month fellowship which, amongst other things, enabled me to write this paper.

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[16] For a useful, if now slightly dated, overview, see Kiker, Bridges, Varghese, Seager and Linkov 2005.

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